



Winter 2003

Volume CXXIII, Number 1



Boston Latin School 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur Boston, Massachusetts 02115

The Register is published twice a year by the students of Boston Latin School. Students in classes I through VI are invited to submit their original writing and artwork. Pieces are selected by the Editorial Board of *The Register* on the basis of quality, not name recognition; the writers of all pieces remain anonymous to the Editorial Board during the selection process to ensure that no one is given an unfair advantage.



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let's **Major** in **life**

let's make candy canes in that deserted cabin in pinewood Maine

let's run around in our underwear
and live life
and say to hell with fortune's
unhappiness
walk into horizon of pinkness
cold as hell, but not care
crunch on crust of winter
with green, blue, red fluorescence

let's be unoriginal and wrap
each other in fleece coziness
between future and past
inside intangible,
questionable
loss of time.

you listened to me
as if they were the last words
on earth and held me,
as if you never
wanted to let go.

compromise, but follow your heart

but no, no. your heart
bled that night in pure
snow of option

the fireplace crackled with orange hallow of warmth between your fingers of rough work vibrantly red faces full of wonder white stuff in hair defrosted dripped down your face

but you decided to build fancy hotels with that chic girl from Florida

and you said, to hell with it

it's not worth it.

the old fashioned café lost its

uniqueness, and Jim the owner

ate his cake with a sigh

of relief

lived in his own corner of individuality

didn't want to

get masters in business

and

make cell phones in Taiwan

didn't matter where you were in ten years, but who you were and what you meant to me.

insecurity changed spontaneity
sparkling snow numbed
vision of metamorphosis
blooming with regret.

Lauren Lazar, I

Generation G

A

P

I glimpsed at the white envelope on the hallway table the moment I stepped through the front door. Zoom in, on the ordinary shape, size, no name, no address. There's a grandfather clock across the table.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

Out of the corner of my eye, I watch the seconds go by. Realizing fifty years from now, I could be standing here, watching the seconds, wondering what I have done with my life. The fact that I am worried worries me. The seconds mocking me, and the fact that I am just standing here.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

TIME. Is my generation going to be known as the age of the boy bands? Like disco, disco seventies. The two words seem to melt together. Forget Led Zepplin, Yes, Pink Floyd, and the other first great hard rock bands. I think of John Travolta. So that's what we'll go down in history as. THE ME GENERATION. WE WANT OUR MTV.

"I WANT MY MTV"

Giant potholes of TV trivia filling up our streets.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

THE SEVENTIES. Every morning my father looks at what I am wearing and exclaims, "You should've seen what I used to wear when I was your age." Is this a foreshadowing to the future? A suit, a tie, clients calling me on the phone. A nice house, a nice car, two kids, a dog, eloping to marry, and then respectfully divorced.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

My parents met each other in Greece; they clicked because they were both Socialists. My mother rambling about Europe, being the optimal tourist Swede. While my father moved back and forth, to and from Greece, only traveling with an army sack. My father's driver's license, long hair, long beard, the making of a revolutionary law student. Wasted on tax law at Arthur Anderson, a now-failing company. Socialist dreams and ideals wasted away on the

9 to 5 Grind

Paying Bills and Reaching deadlines.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

LOSING MY BELIEFS. My mother's favorite memory is the Youth Socialist Meeting in Germany. But she doesn't talk publicly about that anymore. An ever-muted society, becoming ever silent, everyday. No room to breathe or speak of the ideas which you work for.

Exhale the Negative Energy Inhale the Positive Energy

Our Millennium is full of Enlightened Zen philosophers, finding new cures for maladies. On the dot-com superhighway of cyber-sex and pornography. Merged with encyclopedias, who needs to read a book? What's your cause, your ribbon or pamphlet you're handing out? It doesn't matter if you have a family to think about.

Tick Tock Tick Tock

I stare at the envelope. I walk past it, thinking, "I've got time." Background music...The Rolling Stones "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes you just might find You Get What You Need."

Eleni Gaveras, I

I wake in the morn to the thought of You And a return to dreams, my one desire. Stepping into the early sunless dew I feel displaced, wandering earthly mire.

As the time passes, the deep darkness fades, Overhead there glides a lone Morning dove— Through the trees a slant of gray light cascades Down my face, a squint, and then on I shove.

But the tedious day allows the mind to flee From clear, pertinent thought, and so instead I am lost in the clouds of reverie, Flying towards the sun, Us inside my head.

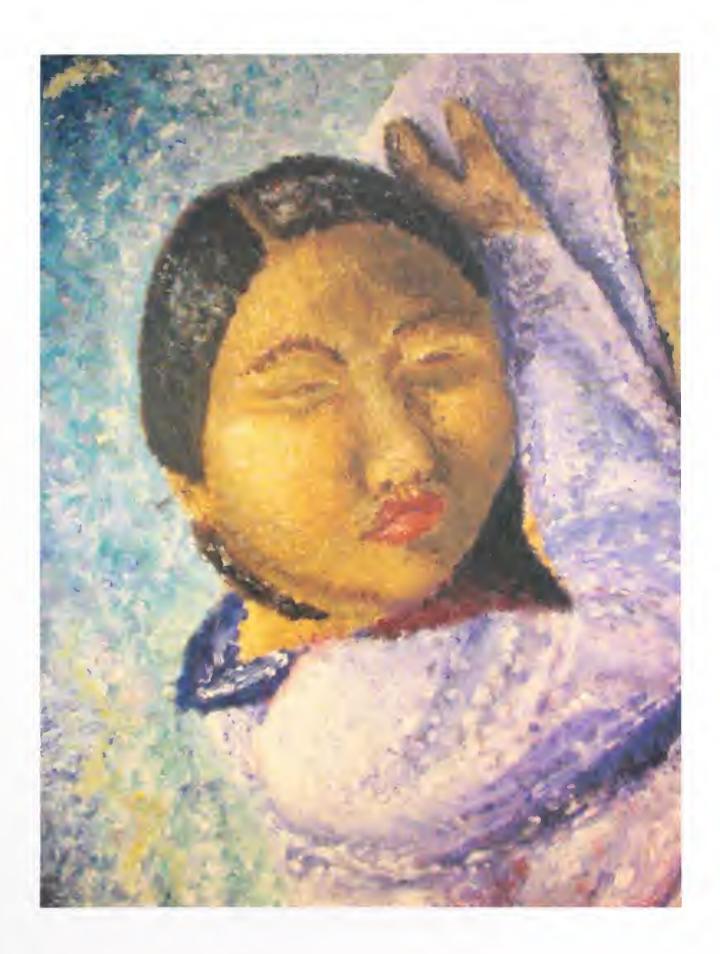
So to my bed I fall, lying cover-deep, All I want is You, my b'loved lover, Sleep.



Aubrie Pagano, II



you don't think human eyes as soon as they blink can begin to lie didn't you know the printed ink you see below can make you think that what I write and whatever I blot is not right only what I thought deep inside like a swallowed drink beginning to reside is what I think don't think I gloat nor do I weep a thought so remote I begin to sleep



you make me laugh not because you're funny but because you look as if you were drawn in a picture book

you're two-dimensional
and have no lips
you don't need them
because all your thoughts
are prewritten for you
all you have to do
is mouth what they want you to

what's it like to live in a picture book?

the grass is always green
everybody is the same color
and the sun doesn't
burn holes in your back
even the animals
walk around smiling
I wish I could live
in a picture book

instead of my photo album

Nikki Wells, IV



I told her the only way to live is to try and perhaps love and be hurt.

He told me that emotions do not exist.

She told me that she did not want to get hurt.

I told her pain is temporary.

He told me that we live in the new millennium.

I told her that love is a chance worth taking.

He told me that love is not real.

She told me that some people are not worth taking chances on.

He told me that the earth is flat, that the universe is flat.

I told her that she would never know who was worth a chance until she took one.

He mentioned the fourth dimension.

She said she wished she could do that.

I said that nothing is difficult that is not viewed as difficult.

He said to me that he did not love her anymore.

She said that she had seen me get hurt and did not like that.

I told her that getting hurt is nothing as long as you get back up.

He told me to go back to the seventeenth century.

I told him that hurting her would not be easy.

She told me that she was scared.

I told her that living is scary, that loving is scary, that getting up each day is petrifying, but we do it.

He said he is a coward. I told him to do it himself.

Caitlyn Zeller, I





Atmosphere Atmosphere Atmosphere Atmosphere

A Ring around the Rosies A Pocket full of Posies Ashes, Ashes We all fall down.

I dreamt of stork men. Dreams like those born of fever, full of blood and sweat and pain. How can you save me when you cannot save yourself? The cries of the sick rang in my ears. The stench—oh, the unbearable stench of blood—of the dying and the dead. The stork men. They who claimed to be doctors, swaddling their faces and bodies in canvas and robes—robes to keep out sickness...turn away death. They were afraid of being touched, and they would not touch. They could not touch the sick. They came to help, but so often all that could be done was to ease the passage. The death will come to you too...and I will watch, even as you shy from the suffering. To say the last rites, open the gates of the Otherworld...if there is one free of suffering and pain. Yea as I walk through the shadow of the valley of death... To make the death easier, less painful. I fear no evil, for Thou art with me... I think I may have feared them more than anything else. Stork men, you who watch the sick from the shadows... I would not let them come near me—will not let the sickness near the skin... Even the beaks were little comfort, the paper cones full of herbs...a pocket full of posies...Rosemary and lavender, thyme against the Death—not time, there is no time left—and St. John's Wort, in case of witches come to cast spells on the sickly body. Some of the more superstitious—you don't fear the fey when you know that worse exists—said that the Death found its birth with a witch. A powerful strega indeed—smile and nod and sew, queen of witches—making careful poppets out of flax, and straw and hair—once little boys and girls—sticking them full of iron, pins in their flesh and sores erupt where the pins strike... A ring around the rosies...

The same little children who once danced and sang in a circle, around the dead, around the dying, even when this death and dying were only but myths, far away in distant London...it would never touch us here. Little children—you thought you were gods and goddesses—thought they would never fall down, never fall to the ground writhing in death. Laugh the laugh of the righteous, you dancing children. Never fall but to get back up giggling and laughing, dirt streaking their faces. I was among them, a link in the ring of rosies—If I fall now, I will never get back up...

I imagine the pains coming to me, the swellings on my arms, oozing pus and death stink, blood, and again the pains, travelling through my brittle limbs, settling in the pit of my stomach, a rock, a lump of hard metal. Even in the stomach of the ladies—reed thin even before—the ladies, trembling like leaves before they die—but will you come back in the spring?—in cambric shifts to hide the sores. They sicken and die like the villagers, even as they swallow the crushed emerald medicine—they will pay you in jewels if you let them live. Their throats tightening as the richness pours down—cuts up their insides and bleeds out the badness—to bleed out the sickness and vapors. Glassy, shiny medicine like the eyes of the dead, open, staring—look at me, see me stand above you, see you, see me Fixed in death glare. The same look on all their faces, not fear, not pain...but resignation, acceptance—at the end death is better than the life you would have had. Everyone knows they will die. In these times, Death with his sickle cuts true—iron and wood take you for their own. He misses no one on his way. All see themselves reflected in the faces of the dead, in their eyes, in the bodies wheeled to the pyre by the stork men who shiver as the fingers—skeleton fingers—brush their own, even through the layers of canvas and silks—burning brightly, strongly, coldly with the burden of death. Ashes, Ashes...

I see myself. Jimmy, the miller's boy—the red in his hair is dulled by death. Me. Harry—he fell in the millpond when he was just a lad, and almost drowned. Me. Morgan. Me. Alysse. Me. Even the crone at the top of the hill—we used to laugh and taunt her for her limp...even a cripple is equal in death. Me. In death, who are we to judge one from the other? But I refuse to let myself go. I will not join their number. I will not die. But we all fall down...

Anneke Schwob, IV





Mn. Sleaze

Oh boy...I don't know about this. I'm tired. I've been surrounded by smut and shame and it seems as if every day it gets only worse. What have I done with the last forty years of my life? Really now. There's so much I wanted to do, things I wanted to change. Have I settled? Settled with this cesspool of abysmal nightmares that I fearfully call my life? It's all been a complete waste—well, maybe not *complete*, I mean, I was mayor once. But look at me now.

My hair's thinning, my eyes hurt all the time, and my face looks like a raisin. Nobody respects me. I get dirty looks from mothers, old women wag their wrinkly fingers at me, wherever I go, people insist on chanting my name. I have a fan base in every trailer-park home in America.

I get threats on a daily basis; apparently I'm "the blight of American society." Those hypocrites! They're trying to cancel my show and yet they still watch it.

But I guess they're right...maybe I should stop putting grandmothers on my stage and do more uplifting things like Maury's paternity tests or Sally's reunions...but what I've done has gotten me so far.

Have I not taught my viewers priceless lessons like staying away from prostitute nieces or being wary of men who wear women's lingerie? Am I not providing entertainment at its finest? The crowd's starting to get rowdy. Listen, they're calling for you! It's time to go on. They love you, they want you! Think about the countless millions who skip work to watch your show, forget their families, play hooky, forget to eat, sleep or shower! Yes, they need me and I need Jerry, Jerry, Jerry, Jerry, Jerry...

Faith Imafidon, I

The door opens and in he walks, Tall, lean, and determined. The room is empty but for a piano and a stand. He sits and opens the case that holds This thing that is his life. It makes a slight noise as he brings it to his lap. He starts his ritual before practicing, Looking it over for imperfections; Admiring it all the while. He is alone in this room But he has never felt so alive. This thing brings him out of his shell Makes him feel needed. Sure he's got friends, plenty of them. They don't fill the void. Music fills the void. He plucks a string and marvels at the beauty. All that he loves is in this instrument;

He plays his heart out, singing along once in a while. And she stands outside the room Listening as he sings about love and loss Her heart bleeding at the thought that this is all he wants And all he will ever need to fill the void,

Sings to him as he begins his favorite part of the day.

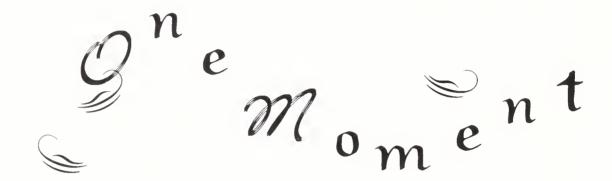
His love, comprised of wood and strings,

Yearning to be that guitar.

Michelle Slade, I







We were walking home from the West Roxbury commuter rail station, and it was a nice day. The sun was out for once, but at this time it wasn't overhead; it was pleasant and warm on our backs and not shining into our eyes. There was a gentle wind blowing the bright leaves to the ground, and it looked as if it were snowing colors. Such gorgeous weather, I thought; it wasn't exactly warm out, but not too chilly either. The air smelled fresh and renewed after so many days of moist rainy weather, during which the earth had inherited a persistent damp smell. But now everything seemed new, vivid, and beautiful, sweetly outlined by the setting sun.

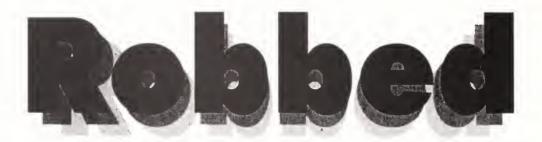
I couldn't help smiling as we walked at a leisurely pace, not saying anything to each other because we were both so deeply entranced in this moment. This is what really matters, I thought to myself. Moments like these make all our days pleasant and worthwhile. I thought of how incredibly relaxed I felt, and how I had stopped worrying about all the things I needed to do for school, the essay I needed to write, the person I had to meet. All of that didn't matter anymore. I just wanted to keep walking into the sunset. Although I was physically there, aware of every step I took, aware of the crunching of the leaves under my sneakers, and fully conscious of that low-hanging bush up ahead, which I needed to avoid, my mind was elsewhere. I was in my own little world, now wandering all over the universe, now transcending the boundaries of time. Time didn't apply to me anymore. Why should it? What did a few seconds or a minute or an hour matter if the moment was so peaceful? The sky was a pale blue with some slowly moving clouds. I observed their movement and wondered at how they never failed to exist day after day; no matter what happened in my life, in my friend's lives, and in the world, the clouds would still be there, constantly changing form and adapting to each new day. I looked at the setting sun and thought of how another girl far from here might be looking at this same sun and thinking the same thoughts. I thought of how I managed to run into friends I hadn't seen for years at the most inopportune times. It amazed me that such occurrences could happen in such a vast, populated world.

My mind wandered back to space. How is it that the universe expands endlessly in all directions? If it just ended, would it look like white space or black space? But that would be *something*, wouldn't it? It's impossible to have nothing. Even nothing would have to be *something*. Does everything even have to end? Why does the universe have to end, if life doesn't end? Sure people die, and eventually, if their actions weren't important enough, the memory of them dies too. But other people live on, the race itself lives and flourishes, the trees live, nature lives. Life seems to be everywhere. Funny, I think to myself, how I managed to think the exact opposite thoughts just the other day, because it was bleak and raining and everything appeared dead, or in the process of dying. I constantly contradict myself like that. But then I think, doesn't everyone? If we never change our opinions we would be a boring race, mentally incapable of learning and adapting to what we learn.

"So how was your day?" he said, giving me a smile. I blinked as I was snapped back into reality, back into the here and now. I tried to remember all the things I had thought about, and how I had ended up generalizing about the psychology of the human race. I couldn't remember anymore.

Masha Zolotarev, II





The flowers are in full bloom, giving the room a sweet fragrance. Their petals, dipped in gold, red, purple, and white hues, give an expression of life and happiness. It is a bright and sunny day; the radiant light streams through the multi-colored stained glass windows. A large number of people are gathered in the benches below. Men, women, and children bear witness to the event occurring right before them. On any other day, this scene could have been the ideal picture of happiness, a freeze-frame of life. On any other day, everything about this room would convey an expression of joy.

Except for the Casket.

The black Coffin, Itself a presence of Its own, casts darkness over the entire scene. It is placed at the front of the church, in plain view for everyone to notice. It accentuates the heavy silence of the moment, a silence that freezes everyone in his seat. As I observe the scene around me, I feel an incredible urge to speak out. I yearn to yell, to shatter the silence and force everyone to talk, to move, to listen. But the silence is too strong for me to break. As hard as I try, I can't make any sound. I've been robbed of my voice by the silence that fills the empty space in the church. Finally, the silence is broken.

The church is filled with crying.

Everyone is weeping. It pains me more than the silence. It is heart-wrenching, unbearable, unbreakable, unshakeable. I try to react, try to comfort those who can't hold back the tears. But I don't know how to do this. Never before have I seen this sort of pain in my entire life. My mind is blank; not one coherent thought passes through my brain. I feel nothing. I try to think of some way to ease the suffering of those around me. But I've been robbed of my mind by the pain, by the emotion of the moment.

The funeral progresses.

It continues, grindingly slow in its procedures. The mass seems to be an eternity of suffering. My mind wanders to past events. I remember the night of the accident. I remember clearly hearing the news. How there was a car crash, a severe car accident that claimed one life. I remember the blank, emotionless face of the news anchor describing the facts of the case, as if they were a list of chores. I remember hearing that the deceased was a victim of a reckless driver, a driver too drunk to stop at a red light. The news broadcast was so long ago, I can't remember what I was doing. I can't remember what the day was like before the incident. It was as if it all happened in another age, another space.

My mother stands up in the crowd.

I'm brought back to the present as I notice that the mass has continued. My mom is crying as she walks up to the podium. She's giving a eulogy, or trying to at least. She's looking at the Coffin as she chokes out each word of the eulogy. She's describing how she felt when she heard the news. The news of the car accident. How someone could have been so careless to drink and drive. She tries to continue, but nothing is coming out; tears fill the emptiness that the failed words leave behind. I wish I could help her, comfort her. But as I look at the Casket, I can't help but fear. Fear for my mom, my dad, my whole family. I'm gripped with the realization that this will someday happen to them. That they too will be sealed in a Coffin, a tomb. I try to move, but I can't. I feel numb, immobile. The fear has robbed me of my body.

The funeral continues.

The priest is discussing the gospel story. He tries to explain how accidents happen, how God only takes those whom He loves the most. He tries to console the congregation by saying the dead are with the angels in heaven. The priest continues, trying to give enough wisdom to ease the suffering of the family and the friends of the lost. The priest ends his sermon. Despite the futility of his words, I wish that he would keep talking. I wish he could say something, anything to keep the silence away. But the church is once again plunged back into a deep quiet. I don't know if I can make it through this funeral. I can't handle the gravity of it all. I want to run outside, joke with my friends, eat dinner with my family, anything to escape the awful mood of the entire ordeal. I remember all the good times I've had, all the times I was happy and didn't have to be filled with grief. But the Coffin reminds me to stop my fanciful daydream. I can no longer go back to those happy memories. The present is here and now, and I can't escape it. My innocence is gone, robbed by death.

The funeral is ending.

The organ is playing music again. Everyone is filing out of the church. My family proceeds slowly. They're all crying, but I can't help them. I have no voice, no mind, no body; my innocence is gone, robbed by the silence, by the pain, by fear, by death. Robbed of everything I hold dear. The Church is empty. I lie alone in the Casket, so very alone. I have been robbed of life.

Kevin Dacey, I





t

e

At the intersection of brutality and evolution A lone man meets his less advanced cousins And watches as they live the law of the jungle, Watches as they kill and then are killed in turn. He watches the young lion leap upon the back Of the fleeing gazelle, watches the older lion Die crippled and helpless, watches the carrion birds And scavengers feast upon the dead, ramming As much living as they can into their short span Of life.

He smells the carcasses of the dead animals Before him, the perfume of the wild, But from behind wafts the delicious aroma Of frying bacon on a grill And the nothing scent of filtered air.

The wild noises seem to create
A euphonious melody, rising
Over him, at odds with the cool, unemotional
Rhythmic hum of computers, televisions and
Radios.

Stoic trees are observed with interest, Able to find homes on both avenues while Animals shrink away from the future and Technology replaces biology.

The ghosts of ancestors long dead call out To tell the single, solitary man not to disturb That which is the only testimony to their Existence, but humanity cannot listen to them, Progress must be made and those impeding it Crushed without a backward look to the past.

The man looks at his hands and thinks he Sees the hands of that ancient ancestor, Brown, bleeding, mauled by years of labor, But it is not so, it cannot be so, for there is no room for independence on the street of evolution.

Finally that man, on the cusp of understanding, Shies from enlightenment, turns back And silently, impossibly asks
Those faceless individuals that rule the Future what they see when they look At their own hands.

James Barned-Smith, IV





Call me God.

From the beginning of eternity, I've been here. Sat in this very room and looked at these very walls. It's sickening – there's absolutely nothing here. Everything is white. Except an ugly picture of some completely neutral flowers and a window – a very *small* window at that. I don't know what to do with myself most of the time. That's the worst part – the boredom. Sometimes I go crazy because of it – rage, scream, yell, throw myself around, hallucinate...It's awful and terrible, and yet almost a welcome change. Because it'd always be preceded by the worst sense of...dullness. I feel as though my mind is the empty space between two window panes in winter – full of dust, dead bees and flies (with their little legs firmly pressed to their bodies), spider-webs, white light, and nothing. At times it almost drives me to the annihilation of myself. But of course that's impossible for a being such as I.

It was during one of these semi-maddening fits of boredom that it happened that I created the human race.

When my head is clear, I wonder just what exactly was I thinking. At first, of course, it amused me to watch them. In their silliness, they were funny. But now I grow weary of their petty, self-important thoughts that barely scratch the surface of life. There are some – very few – who understand what it's all about. At these I used to smile and wink and they'd grin back and promise not to tell. But by now I'm sick even of the "enlightened ones."

I long for some new amusement, but there is nothing here that could be of any interest to *anyone*. The only things are my many hallucinations. Lately they've been coming more often that ever before. And always the same ones – men and women clad in white, speaking softly and calmly. I sometimes wonder, if the human race could see me now. Their great, almighty, many-faced God chatting merrily with figments of His own imagination.

It fascinates me that my mind could come up with these images and give them such distinct characters. We have entire conversations – I tell them stories, and they listen. I think one of them may even be writing a book. How curious.

I long to get away from this place. I keep telling them that, but they just look sympathetic. They ask me why. Sometimes, when I'm feeling heroic, I say I must go and look out for my people. They nod understandingly. At other times I tell them the truth – that this place is driving me mad. They nod understandingly then, too, but I don't think they really believe me.

I'm plotting. Once eternity is over, I'll be free. I'm plotting and deciding all the things that I'll do. First off, I'll find the biggest dandelion-flower there is and smell it, deep and hard. People have knocked their heads onto the fact that dandelions are weeds. They aren't.

Right now I'm going through one of my good phases. These thoughts – thoughts of dandelions and puddles and sunshine and spring – all fill my mind right now. I don't feel as sick as I normally do here. And my room, although I still detest it, seems more tolerable during moments like this. I sit on my bed and thoughtfully watch the ugly painting hanging on the wall across from me.

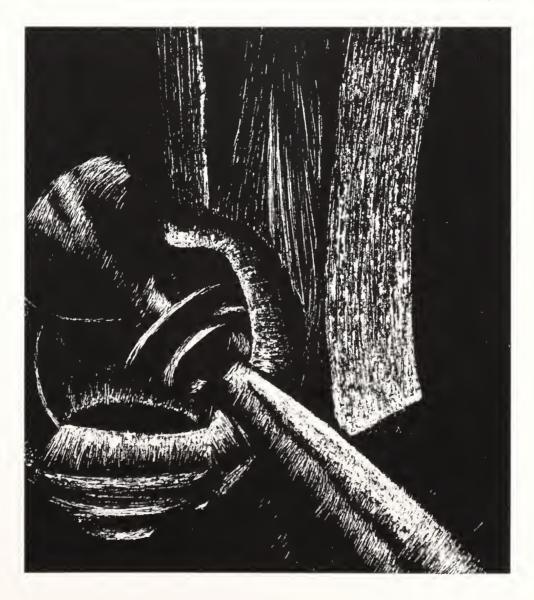
There's suddenly a *click!* And a *creak!* And a soft *bump!* I quickly spin around, alarmed, to see my mind painting pictures before my eye – again the hallucination.

She stands, my creation, golden hair shimmering, wrapped in a snowy robe. She holds her hands behind her back and smiles gently.

"Ah, my child," I say softly and wearily. She smiles more and advances.

"Good morning, Mr. Johnson," she says. "It's time for your shots."

Alina Fomovska, IV



Too Many Nights

Too many nights have I spent knowing that the world is too Big

Knowing that it's cold outside and even when it's not It still is

Too many nights have been tortured with the screams from the Silent voice in me

Can you believe

That in one night and one light you could lose
The only thing they say they can't take
Shatter the only thing they say they can't break?
Sheddin' tears on satin pillows

Listen to the glass break outside your windows
Hear the gun shots

And fear for your life, and not even know that it was already Lost when you came into this place

I found out the easy way put the knife down

Smelled the innocence melt away from my soul trying
To keep myself whole because if I cry I die

There's only one chance and people still take it for granted Killing seeds that haven't even been planted

It's so hard to see the sun when my eyes won't see Beyond the tip of the gun

Looking back at me like so many shadows in the stars Of a distant future I don't even know where

I'm going but I have to get there

Soon there won't even be dreams to share

I hear the sirens of my destiny

Telling me I am losing the fight in the

Only war that means something

Declaring that I'll be everything I feared

If I fear nothing

But I already know

Political innocence means more to people than their own Independence

It's like a death sentence for the mind It's one crime I won't commit I'd rather smile at death instead of the angel smiling back It's my turn to let white doves spread my wings and watch Me fly

> Everlasting pain comes from the story told In the pavement of the streets I've blessed People never know if it's too late if they

Can withstand the test Of one time One life

I leave my weaknesses to waste like the garbage
Collected on a random Saturday
Somebody tell the world there won't be someone to pick
Up the broken pieces every time it falls apart
My actions speak for themselves
My silence reveals the void in which I walk
Taking insanity with a head held high in the epitome
Of defiance

I've made my alliance with the unsleeping street lights
That tell the real story

Because my screams were drowned out by the screeching Tires of the getaway cars

And the urgent footsteps of the man who was told he
Was doing the right thing the wrong way
Unheard by his daughter waiting for him to come
Home with the bread he promised at the end of the night

Unnoticed because of the sacrifice

And only if I knew how to convince the
Prison guards
That everything is fine

That it's impossible to fall off when you

Walk the thin red line

But it's been too many nights
With knife fights and body bags zipped tight

Bold nights

With reality that stings like a bullet bite Too many nights

Chris Saunders, II

- Utopia -

Sit on my lap, and hear and glean, Under the rustling of the machine, The anecdotes of the weary lost souls, Who spread out their lives upon grassy knolls.

The men they were able and fit and quite bold The women idealized, never need scold; The children obedient, courteous, serene, Under the rustling of the machine.

The air it was filtered and quiet and clean
Under the rustling of the machine;
Each minute strand intrusive was found
And smothered as grass beneath concrete ground.

The voices sailed high from imploring below As crescent as rivers, untwisting in flow; The notes sprang to heavens, aspiring, pristine, Under the rustling of the machine.

And nothing was altered or painful or mean
Under the rustling of the machine;
We sprang to our stations, conjoined deep within
And nothing was thought of the unknown word: sin.

There are towers and bunkers, expansive and wide There are never delusions, beneath which to hide; We are always ecstatic and kindly and clean Under the rustling of the machine.

There are roadways and highways, encircled with green Under the rustling of the machine; And over this mass-produced ocean of life We can always drive freely without causing strife.

Things change in every world, or so I've been told By the eldest of elders, the choicest of old And one thing arose to challenge the state Of some sorry old matter, of some reprobate.

He died on a rack, solidified strongly;
There was never a doubt that he had done wrongly.
He had opened a gate, and let soulless fly out
That should have been purged, that weakened the stout.

There are rows upon rows of devices unseen
Under the rustling of the machine,
Where the choicest are chosen, the greatest kept great
Thinking great thoughts, with a confident pate.

There are storage cells, children, hives of intellect too, Where these greatest of greats are prepared to be you, But there also are sections, that are not quite as clean, Under the rustling of the machine.

There are always a few, or a dozen, thirteen
Under the rustling of the machine,
And these simple few, well, just aren't quite as good
As the great greatness standard that you've understood.

Now my children, in cases, we break our own rules Because to protect you, we must isolate fools; We must extricate cogs much too fat or too lean Under the rustling of the machine.

We must only have workers, or friends for the dean,
Under the rustling of the machine;
We can never have ingrates, or slackers, or worse,
And you never shall see them, for such is their curse.

Now children I come, to the part I hate most, For you certainly wonder "Where goes this weak host? If never are integrated, never are seen Under the rustling of the machine,

Then where could they go?" To the pyre, I'm afraid.
All those flames you see rising are they, burnt and dismayed,
Surging up to the heavens, aspiring, pristine,
Under the rustling of the machine.

The myriad multitudes, useless, unclean
Under the rustling of the machine,
Are cremated, helpless, and sent to a star
Where no one will miss them, and they cannot mar.

There was one singularity, as I have said
Who had wondered at length why these dead must be dead,
And he thought very great, for his mind was quite keen
Under the rustling of the machine.

But all of a sudden he was thinking all wrong And he talked and he screamed, with a voice far too strong; He was shunned and excluded, he was hit and spit at He was constantly weeping, and his voice had grown flat.

The silly man felt there was beauty in faults, He would trumpet for vices, against all assaults, And he yearned for a world, not quite clean and pristine Outside of the rustling of the machine.

And perhaps he had found it, when he let the weak live, When he offered the life that we never could give; He stole several children from the factory line, And from high up position did he choose to ensign.

He took them outside of these courteous streets, Into a harsh world full of pain and defeats, And he raised them to live in an opposite way, And with vices and strife they have vanished away.

Away from the walls that are cleanly and kind, We caught up with his twisted, demented old mind, And those elders that brought him to me did relate That he spoke not nor moved, in his perilous state.

Yet his features were joyful, as the elders had seen, While his body was shredded by a killing machine, And I once did travel, away from these halls, By a place that was distant, on routine recalls.

And I happened to look, at a throng all outside And I happened to listen, without time to decide, Though their clothes were unclean and faces were dirty There sprang from the group of them, twenty or thirty.

There sprang such a sound that went straight through my head, And so beautiful, poignant, I thought I was dead; It shattered the earth, every spot it renewed, The voices of twenty or thirty imbued.

But nothing was altered or painful or mean
Under the rustling of the machine;
I sprang to my stations, conjoined deep within
And nothing was thought of the unknown word: sin.

There are towers and bunkers, expansive and wide, There are never delusions, beneath which to hide; We are always ecstatic and kindly and clean Under the rustling of the machine.

Andrew Freeman, I

I Can't

I can't hear you, my brother crying, crying from the pain of their whips hitting your back.

I can't hear you, my sister crying, crying from the pain that ensues after being raped.

I can't hear you, my children crying, crying from the realization that the life you dreamed of was just a dream.

I can't hear you, my mother crying, crying from the pains of bearing a high-yellow baby who resembles the man you call master.

I can't hear you, my father crying, crying about the shackles of your feet, the lashes on your sons' back, the violation of your daughters, the shattered dreams of your children, and the children you can't claim. I can't hear you.

I can't hear you, Martin talking, talking about your dreams to live in a nation where your children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I can't see you, Coretta crying, crying for love lost, freedom lost, husband lost.

I can't see you, Rosa sitting, sitting, still sitting in the white man's seat.

I can't see you, Emmitt hanging from the tree that your father planted, the tree your oppressors damned. I can't see you.

I can't see you, Malcolm falling, falling from the bullet of hatred, leaving your family alone.

I can't see you, my brother working, working in cotton fields, but still leaving your family penniless.

I can't see you, my sister cooking, cooking their food, but leaving your family hungry.

I can't see you, my mother washing, washing their clothes with your calloused hands, but still leaving your family naked.

I can't see you, my father dying while knowing your sons are working, your sisters are cooking, your mothers are washing, your leaders are falling.

I can't see you.

I can hear you, my people singing, singing soulful hymns.

I can see you, my oppressors falling, falling from the power of our unity.

I can see you, my children playing, playing in the fields where my brothers lost their innocence.

I can hear you, my people marching, marching to the beat of freedom.

I can see you, my sisters reading, my brothers reading, my fathers LIVING!

I can see you.

I can hear you.

Can you hear me?

Janelle Jackson, II

Bangkok
many stray animals
no owners to take care of them
at night there are only dog barks and motorcycle screeches
a walk-in mother cat
with soft golden fur
all ruined by a quick bite and the sight of a flea

T

days of scorching sun outside in 91 degree weather humid sweaty days during the rainy season nights of merciless mosquitoes scurrying two-inch-long cockroaches almost cool breezes but not instead the smell of fumes from the motorcycles and taxis speeding at three in the morning all ruined by burned and bug-bitten skin



large beautiful grand air-conditioned malls seven levels of shops from movie theaters and arcades to clothes and toys huge hot stuffy humid outside markets small vendors selling dried shrimp, glass jelly drinks to fake Hello Kitty and fake Nike all ruined by spending all my baht



small shops serving only one type of noodle dish clear noodle soup to duck noodle soup Pizza Hut large pizza with seafood topping McDonald's serving grilled chicken sandwiched between two slices of sticky rice or the common hamburger KFC serving spicy fried chicken or spicy fried octopus with a side of French fries



Pad Thai, Rad Nar o Muu Ping and kao neao drink carts selling Fanta, Miranda, Coke, Pepsi, Sprite, 7-Up, Green Spot all ruined by sun-warmed drinks and too much chili



shopping centers with grocery stores
Tsutaya movie rentals, Sony stores,
amusement rides, arcades, book stores,
Grammy CD stores, and food courts
dozens of Buddhist temples all in one city
monks in yellow robes walking all over the place
spotted in cars, in taxis, and on motorcycles
all ruined by 3-hour traffic with the smell of carbon monoxide clinging in the air

Pattaya
the sun shining
the warm weather with the slight breeze
the cool water
the glittering sand
the gently rippling waves
the sound of contented people tanning in the sun
the smell of coconuts, fried fish, and papaya salad with kao neao
all ruined by a sting from a six-inch jellyfish

Other regions tropical forests surrounding majestic hills and cascading waterfalls tiger warnings many, many more Buddhist temples all ruined by too many temple visits

Phuket
thousands of green trees
hundreds of coconut trees
banana plants
clear ocean water tumbling over white sand
and swarming with multi-colored fish
villages and bumpy roads
more temples
all ruined by a collision with a pretty surprised yellow fish

Thailand
a home is where the heart is
but my heart isn't here
it is there
in
Thailand
with the mosquitoes

Monica Wong, V



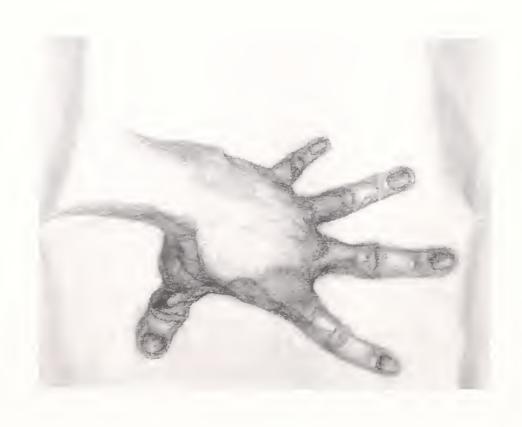
Geema

My grandmother's hands are quirky – just like her native tongue of Schweizerdeutsch. Nobbly and bony, one could hardly call them beautiful. The veins protrude like a snaking garden hose, and the fragile skin is often bruised. It reminds me of rice paper – semi-translucent and uneven in tone. Once upon a time I am sure the fingers were long and elegant; however, I am equally sure that the glamour goes unmissed. Like all hands, these tell the story of a lifetime, and every misshapen curve stands for something accomplished.

Despite being old and worn, the fingernails are long and beautiful – always perfectly filed. These are not hands worn by abuse and struggle, but by love and hard work. I have always been awed by my grandmother's hands and can recall from a very early age sitting and watching those hands for hours, while they knitted mittens and sweaters and afghans with an agility and skill like no other. When I watch my grandmother's hands I feel as if I am looking into the future of my own hands; I see the same crooked fingernail on her left hand, and the same oddly slanted cuticles on the index and middle fingers of the right. I even see the same ugly callous beginning to form on my own hand where I hold my pen.

These hands have seen better days. Where they once moved slowly and steadily, they now make quick snatching movements – hiding the tremors of old age. I watch her face as she watches her own hands, and I can tell she is watching her hands turn into her mother's. As I watch I often wonder what it will be like when my turn comes and I watch my hands shake and tremble just as hers do.

Allegra Timperi, II



A Series of Moments...

The laughing died down and the lights faded. We had done it; all our long and hard work on the play had paid off. I felt the relief from anxiety tingling through my arms. For just that moment no one else was there. As I stood up, I saw her eyes reflect everything I was feeling. Without thinking about, it we were right next to each other and I was holding her in my arms. I didn't want to let go. The embrace was shortly over and the voices of the others seemed to return. I put her down, but I never let her go.

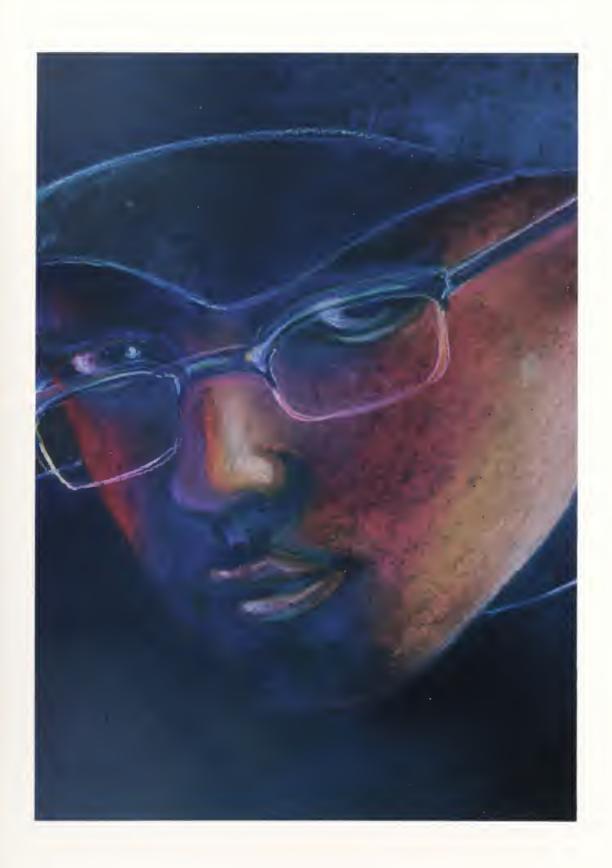
The next few hours didn't really happen; the moment, as short as it was, held my attention completely. In the theater she was the only one there; the voice started reading names, some of the names, and my hand found hers. She gripped my fingers tightly and the voice grew softer. Our moment had returned, shadowing the realization that the voice had read our name. In the midst of all the cries of happiness, I held her in my embrace and that moment seemed eternal.

We never looked at each other the same way as we had before. For the next week we shared little moments when our eyes met and I always caught a smile from her. In a new theater after another performance with a new voice, her hand found mine. We didn't hear our name, but that didn't matter to us. In the dark with the noisy hum of the engine, we sat together on our way home. Her head rested on my shoulder and the warmth of her body against mine made those hours seem to go by in a matter of minutes, as one long moment. I didn't want to let go.

How could I tell her how I felt? I was having trouble understanding it myself. I still don't know how those moments could have meant so much. All that I felt for her was lost in futile expression when I tried; there was a lack of words with which to express my feelings. I've never felt this way before. I have no set path to follow. For all the uncertainties in my life, only one thing has felt so right: a moment with her that doesn't go away. When she's not around, that "us" stays with me for a long, long time. This path is unclear, and I will leave it to her.

Evan Mehler, I





The **Flesh**is Winning

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I really do. I just don't feel it anymore. Somehow there used to be a meaning behind all the Our Fathers and Hail Marys, and somehow there isn't anymore, and I feel as if I'm just going through the motions. Not that there's necessarily something wrong with that. Millions of devout souls have lived and died going through the motions and that doesn't make them bad people. But I have ridiculously high expectations, and somehow I think I'm entitled to something more. I want peace, understanding, reverence, faith, wisdom, and love.

The red robe, I suppose, is intended to infuse me with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. When I put it on, my mother makes me take it off again so she can iron it and everyone will know that she loves me. I sit in the robe waiting and eat a KitKat bar and finish up the newspaper. I anticipate an anticlimax.

The Mass starts as Masses start and I try hard to concentrate because this could be a turning point. Do you reject Satan and accept the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I do, but inevitably despite all my efforts I find myself dwelling less on my Lord and Savior and more on what I'm going to write about academic freedom, how having to be here forced me to forgo a perfect opportunity, whether or not Yuan will follow through on her threat not to hang out with me anymore now that I've become a woman, and what I'm going to do with the money I get on Sunday. I catch a little of the second reading. The conflict between the flesh and spirit. The spirit will bear great fruit. But I know the flesh is winning.

Somewhere between the bishop's reading that touches on an excerpt from the essay I had dashed together in fifteen minutes the weekend after the finals and the anointing with oil, my involuntary apathy morphs into some kind of frenzy or desperation. I see my aunt next to me, reciting the Our Father with something akin to passion in her eyes. I think about asking her, "When you pray, is there a connection? Do you feel anything?" I'm sure she'd be happy to answer me, but I know I'll never ask. At some point my face turns white and I start almost shaking and I'm scared to death of I don't know what. I receive the Sign of the Cross in oil and bow my head to pray, and I realize all I'm saying is Please Please Please Please over and over again without even knowing what I'm asking for. Some kind of elusive holiness? I'm finally impassioned, but the only thing I manage to get impassioned about is my lack of passion. I know this sensation will pass because the ceremony will end eventually and I'll go home and put on my sweatshirt and have something to eat and do my situps, but how am I supposed to alter that routine to show that I'm a more devout person newly in touch with my faith? I could go home and lie on my face and think about my inadequacies, but I've done that enough and somehow I doubt it will help. When I emerge from my lengthy plea for I don't know what, I notice that everyone around me is smiling. Some of them don't doubt what they believe and are happy, as they should be, having confirmed their faith and received the gifts of the Spirit. The rest attach no significance to the ceremony, and they attach no significance to the fact that they attach no significance to the ceremony.

They're happy because the whole tiresome process is over, and the fact that they've taken responsibility for their faith means that they don't have to go to church anymore. I'm the only one being ridiculous and tormenting myself, wanting to cry or throw up or pass out or break something. I know plenty of people who would tell me that this is why organized religion is stupid. What could be the point of something that makes you feel desperate and inadequate without reason? But I tend to think that's only avoiding the issue.

And then already I'm snapping at my father, because he's pushing me to get in a picture with the bishop. I have to be first, so he can leave, since it's been two hours and that's longer than he's been in a church in years, only I feel like crying, not smiling for pictures, and snapping at your father is a very unchristian thing to do. This occasion could have been a turning point, but it won't be. Please Please Please, but if I don't know what I'm asking for, I won't get it. Now there are more pictures, and I know I should try to muster a smile, but stone-faced and tearless are the best I can do. Mom knows there's something wrong. Patty thinks I have a cold. Dad's already out the door. Cards and jewelry. Then it's time to go. I add holy water to the holy oil on my forehead.

"Do you feel any holier?" Pauline asks.

"No," I say.

Anonymous



The Register

a

thousand

pieces

The book hits me directly in the heart a beam of light that shatters me into a thousand pieces and salt-water flows out from the edges

a sea of emotion pushes the pieces of me further and further apart until I am spread out across the entire world

and when the waters subside my pieces come back pushed together as if by the receding waters and painstakingly glued to one another

the world is gingerly held within and understanding lies within it though I am at best a leaky human and soon most of it will run out

still, I am stronger where my pieces fit together able to hold a little more understanding a little more liquid hope a little more soul

all good books I revere for they can break us

and heal us and make us human once more.

of

soul

Jane Newbold, V

High SCHOOL



E

E

B

R

T

Y

Are you proud of my bathroom-wall status? The stale gray of this cube bears a name a greasy plaque dedicated just to me. Do needles litter the floor or just dropped smiles?

Lies printed in writing like bubbles
mixing and running
a stained water color
here where the speckled layer shows through
chafed away by begrudging hands
melted into gray
a steaming vat
pus of hate
scribble scribble little mongrel

Is your ego assuaged by your
petty vandalism?
You grin so hard your teeth will break
a gaping wound in your face.
Does the festering bacteria
grime and crust
inspire your black marker brilliance?
Is this ugly stall, surreal under putrid lights,
your safe haven?

Bieta Andemariam, II

Daddy's Little Girl

- "Do your parents fight?" Timidly.
- "Yeah, all the time, girl!" Nonchalantly.
- "My 'rents go at it over and over again every night." Good-humoredly.
- "Not me. I ain't got no daddy." Matter-of-factly.
- "Yeah. A long time ago he did. I don't 'member him much." Indifferently.
- "My dad went to get pizza and never came back. I don't miss him though..." Drearily.
- "Betcha miss that pizza though!" Sarcastically.
- "We all got some crazy families, huh?" Comical.

We'd laugh again. This would go on as talk about crazy families, how his father had a peg leg or how her mother wore combat boots. We were kids being kids. My friends always made me feel as if I wasn't alone. From this point on, I knew that what was happening wasn't only happening to me.

I went home. Dad wasn't there. He didn't come either. Days turned into nights, and both ran past me. I missed my father. I missed him a lot. I started thinking about my mother and how she was feeling. I had always looked at my mother as the bad guy in the situation, and I wasn't looking at this any differently.

During the days that passed, there was the snow delicately blanketing the trees that line streets, causing them to appear as weeping willows.

There was the cold that bit my toes as I got out of bed in the morning.

There was the heat that slapped me in the face as I approached the open oven that was tagteaming with the heater.

There was the soft aroma of homemade cookies fresh out of the oven, sitting on the table, whispering my name in the most unbearable way.

There was the ugly plaid dress that poked and itched, attracted old people, and was just plain ugly. And to top it off, there were the ugly saddle shoes that matched.

There was the Christmas play where the teachers forced girls to dance with boys and pretend they enjoyed themselves.

There was the low crying that crept from under my mother's door and into my brother's room that woke me up at night.

And, there was the waking up on Christmas morning to unwrap completely all the gifts that I had found in the closet and tore little pieces of wrapping paper from, trying to reveal their contents, weeks before.

It was a hard winter, but we got by. Though I was never close to my mother, during this time we were the closest we had ever been. She told me the truth about my father and what he had done to her. Knowing that my father had physically and emotionally hurt my mother made something grow inside of me. It was anger. It was pain. It was misunderstanding and hatred. And it started to engulf me, but I still had affection for my father. Being kept from the truth for so long caused me to doubt whether it was actually the truth.

Looking at my mother, battered and distraught, made me lose every doubt in my mind that this was an untruth. From that moment on, I realized why friends don't miss their fathers as I did. Why these things didn't bother them as they had bothered me. Why my mother locked herself in her room as soon as my brother and I fell asleep. And hatred overwhelmed. It was a goal of mine to forget my father...but it was hard. I love my father. But I love my mother more. It was Daddy who gave me sweets after Mommy said "no." And that's why I have cavities now.

I made it a point to release my anger through my poetry. It became my hobby, my talent, and my life. Everything I felt, I wrote. Everything I saw, I described. And everything I went through, I told. My words were my weapons. The battle between truth and lie made me complex; it made me look at things from a new point of view; and it made me realize that the mouth truly is the most dangerous part of a person.





The Dourist

Since I travel a lot for my job, I'm used to encountering different cultures and I've developed a knack for adapting to them relatively quickly. Living in New York is a kind of constant culture shock in and of itself, so I get plenty of practice, but in addition I've been to more countries that I can remember and never had a hard time adjusting. So I was astonished at the awkwardness I felt during the course of a visit to my old college buddy in Boston.

Things didn't really get difficult for me until after I'd made it through the airport and into downtown. My friend Joseph and I were planning on meeting at five or so at Fanueil Hall Marketplace, outside Quincy Market. If only I'd had the common sense to get a taxi driver, or at least a map, but no, of course not, I wanted to get out there with the real Bostonians, and enjoy my first visit to the historic city.

That was Bad Idea Number One.

Of course, I got lost immediately. My friend's directions, sent to me in the mail weeks ago, were badly abused by the time I rooted them out of the bottom of my backpack. In between the coffee stain and the mysterious brown smudge lay the hieroglyphics that are Joseph's cursive. After a feeble attempt at deciphering them, I threw away the directions and began searching for a friendly-looking Bostonian to help me.

I passed fifteen Bostonians. Three were yelling obscenities, seven were wearing "YANKEES SUCK" t-shirts, two were beating each other up outside a bar, two more were making out in what I later found out is called "The Common" (I originally thought it was "The Come- On" – but that's another story), and one was thoughtfully picking something fuzzy out of his teeth. Needless to say, I was a little put off. Finally, I saw a normal-looking man standing by what seemed to be his car. I summoned the courage and walked over to him.

"Excuse me sir, I'm not from around here. Could you help me with some directions?" He smiled. Good sign. "Oh, shoe-ah, lenme just find my cah keys, gimme a second..." "Your what?"

"My cah keys. They're heah somewheah..." He turned out his pockets and sifted through the tiny ocean of lint in his cupped palm.

"Your khakis?"

"Yah."

"Um...you're wearing them."

"Huh?"

"You're wearing your khakis."

"You can't wehah cah keys!"

" Of course you can! You are wearing them right now."

"No, not my khakis, my CAH KEYS!" Having recovered his keys he waved them in front of my face, speaking as one might to someone with a slight mental disability.

"...oh."

There was a pause. I longed to redeem myself. My first impression in Boston was not going well.

"Oh, that's no problem, just get on the T."

"The tea?"

"Yah."



Now, I should've just asked him to explain, but I was already feeling bad about my inability to catch on to the Bostonian language – I mean, accent – so I thanked him and walked away. He seemed that he had no more to say, but I didn't want to linger – I'd embarrassed myself enough – and I also needed to figure out what kind of a demented Bostonian euphemism "getting on the tea" was supposed to be.

I had an hour before I needed to meet my friend, so I thought maybe I could grab a soda before I met Joseph. All the talk about tea had made me thirsty. But the only drink I encountered was 'tonic'; it sounded medicinal and I didn't want to take my chances. I gave up on the drink and wandered around for a while, remarking on how pretty the old buildings were, the abundance and wherewithal of the pigeons, and how colorful the litter was. I was so lost in thought that I almost missed the information booth (that had maps! Glorious streetmaps!) on the edge of the Common/Come-On. However, I didn't miss it, because I had been ambling with my head down and I walked directly into its left wall. Lucky me.

Once I went in, there was a woman waiting to be informed, but no one to do the informing. Unfortunately, the woman in there with me was a native of the great city, with just as great an accent.

"So where's the person who works here?"

"Ah, she'll be right back, she's puttin' out the gahbidge."

"The what?"

"The gahbidge."

"...uh...sorry?"

"The GAHBIDGE, fuh chrissake, she's takin' out the GAHBIDGE!"

Now, I don't know WHY she was putting out the cabbage, but far be it from me to criticize. I mean, different strokes for different folks, you know? So I waited patiently for the cabbage lady to return with my information.

Once she returned, she sold some Trolley Tour tickets to my companion and then turned her attention to me.

"How why ya?" She asked pleasantly.

I knew it was a question, but I didn't know how to respond. What did she want to know? "How why me"? What?

I nodded and made a little happy noise. It seemed to answer the question.

"I think I need a map... or maybe you can just give me directions. I'm trying to get to Quincy Market."

Braying loudly and nasally, she uttered a stream of colloquialisms that caused minor aural bleeding and then ended with "so just get on the tea." And thus I was back to square one. Too afraid to question their strange custom of getting on the tea, I purchased a map and left Cabbage Lady.

I tried to follow the map; I really did. But it had been a long time since Ms. Arnold's geography class, and I was rusty. And all along the way people kept shouting out and calling me 'wicked' or 'pisser' or 'wicked pisser.' I guess they could tell I was a tourist. Eventually, though, somewhere near the corner of Tremont and Tremont (no, I'm not joking), I ran into Joseph. We greeted each other, I gave him an edited version of my adventures in finding him, and we decided to get a bite to eat. He brought me to Quincy Market (the promised land). But first we stopped off at a Starbucks ("Let's head to Stahbucks." "STAB WHAT?"), because I had this weird craving for green tea.

Lily Mooney, II



THE REFUGEE

I sit at a bench in the park. The sun is setting, staining the sky with beautiful red and gold. It is autumn and the leaves fall to the ground at the slightest wind. They are as colorful as the sky. I sit there admiring the view. Then I notice him.

An aged man walks in my direction. He wears a black silk-lined coat and has black hair. He carries an ebony cane, but his most distinguished feature is his eyes. They are the blackest I have ever seen, yet as dark as they are, they seem to have a glow about them. I think he is a European refugee, very wealthy, having to escape his country from conflict. The refugee sits next to me and views the sunset.

The silence is broken by him. In a deep, slightly accented voice he says, "I like music."

Slightly startled by this question, I regain my composure and respond, "What kind?"

"This." He waves his hands and cane indicating the scenery.

Finally I ask him, "You're not from the US are you?"

"No, I am a displaced person."

"I am sorry. Would you like to tell me about it?"

"I would be wasting your time."

"Not at all, I have no where to be."

With a sigh he begins to tell his story. "These days it is a familiar story. A leader so blinded by his own glory that he can no longer see his blunders. He developed delusions of greatness and posed as the final judge over everything from birth to death and therefore created seeds of his own destruction. It was inevitable under the circumstances."

Rage boils inside me. No man should have that much power. I see his views so vividly; I would have gladly fought this man, were I in his country. "The revolt didn't succeed?"

"No, it proved too weak, too early. It was crushed. Then came the purge. Nearly all of us died. I organized that opposition. I still think it was justified but I dare not go back."

I try to comfort him. "You are in a free country now. You can call the president anything you want and nothing will happen."

He continues, "I am not welcome here either. No man can truly be free unless he is beyond his enemy's reach. When one's foe gains control of every channel of propaganda, uses them exclusively to present his case and suppress the mind and damns the worst of lies, there is hope for me."

The sun has set and the moon is full. It shines in such a way as if it were focusing on him. He stands up and he seems enormous, almost as towering as the trees from my sitting position. He seems not of the world as the moon lights his face. He walks away, his coat in the night breeze resembling billowing wings.

He turns back and looks deep into my eyes, "My name," he says softly, "is Lucifer." He disappears into the darkness.

Philson Ong, II

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